

EAST OREGONIAN

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OUR VIEW

Attorney General race offers a clear choice

The *East Oregonian* editorial board went into our meeting with the two candidates for attorney general open to an alternative.

Incumbent Democrat Ellen Rosenblum has done fine work, but journalists are deeply invested in much-needed public records reforms championed by Rosenblum and Governor Kate Brown. Those reforms have yet to be enacted, and many believe they lack the requisite teeth to make Oregon government more transparent.

Yet after the meeting, minds were quickly made up: Rosenblum is the only choice for the job.

Her opponent, Republican Daniel Crowe, is not ready for a statewide position, and his bluster directed

toward Rosenblum was clearly misplaced. He tried to saddle her with mistakes that were made before she even took office, and when made aware of that fact, was unable to muster another line of attack.

Rosenblum, on the other hand, is a quiet hand in a difficult job, doing her best to avoid the pitfalls that her predecessor John Kroger fell into. Kroger was unable to finish his term, nor get much meaningful legislation passed. Rosenblum considers both the legal and political ramifications and, while that may make her proposals imperfect, it does mean they have a better chance of becoming law.

Rosenblum is the clear choice to be re-elected.

Read has experience, expertise for treasurer

People accuse those running for treasurer of being a boring lot, but perhaps that is what makes a good treasurer.

The four people gunning for the seat do lean toward the soft-spoken and programmatic: Democrat Tobias Read, Republican Jeff Gudman, Independent Chris Telfer and Working Families/Progressive Chris Henry.

Only Read, Gudman and Telfer have actively campaigned for the seat, and we support Read.

Read has the more complete résumé, being one of the longest-serving state representatives (since 2007) who rose to House Speaker pro tempore. He also has worked for the U.S. Treasury and has experience in the private sector, at Nike.

Telfer, a current Oregon Lottery commissioner, is the most interesting alternative, who has tossed out ways the state could improve the dangerous and inefficient marijuana banking system.

Still, treasurer is not a position where you want to take risks. The growing problem that the next officeholder will have to face down is PERS, a rising menace to Oregon's state budget.

As treasurer, Read's planned improvements are small but helpful: modernizing the investment program, hiring state employees to manage investments rather than farming out the job to expensive consultants, and slashing Wall Street fees in the process.

It will take an increase in state employees and their compensation packages, but the idea makes sense. If a sizable portion of the state's budget is dependent on returns from our investment portfolio, then we should have more control over that investment.

All in all, Read has the right amount of experience and expertise and we think he would do a serviceable job in a very important position.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

YOUR VIEWS

Oregon East Symphony starts season with brilliance

Saturday night at the Vert was a very fun evening. Oregon East Symphony chose as their first offering of the season "City Girl," a silent movie from the 1920s.

It was shown with an original modern score composed by John Paul. This score enhanced the character motivation and action of the film beautifully. The musicians played with their usual brilliance.

Keep your eye on future performances with the Oregon East Symphony.

Marva Dawley
Pendleton

Opioid crisis fueled by drug maker lobbyists and special interests

Lawmakers get a huge piece of their campaign cash from donors with ties to the prescription painkiller business. As the election approaches, citizens would like to know what local politicians running for office have ever accepted donations from pharmaceutical companies who make painkillers and lobbyists groups funded by drug makers.

Between 2006 and 2015, the makers of prescription painkillers have spent millions in campaign contributions to help kill or weaken measures aimed at preserving their status quo of aggressive prescribing. This explains when one vet recently broke her hand, she was stunned to be prescribed 180 OxyContin pills. She needed eight. In other words, painkillers are being over-prescribed.

Four of every five heroin addicts began their nightmare being prescribed painkillers, twice as strong, for an injury or surgery. The makers of painkillers are reaping enormous profits from this aggressive prescribing. The drug makers fund lobbyists to delay and defend

anytime the painkillers' addictive nature comes under increasing scrutiny.

The Pain Care Forum, a lobbyist group, outs prescription opioids as having a vital role in improving the quality of life for millions. Remember, OxyContin was created for fatal cancer, not broken ankles or carpal tunnel.

Oregon ranks third in the U.S. for having the largest portion of its total contributions to politicians come from Pain Care Forum.

There have been about 19 lobbyists hired each year for the past decade to represent members of the Pain Care Forum. There have been an average of about 30 lobbyists hired each year for the past decade to represent members of the Pain Care Forum in Washington state. That puts Washington second in the nation for receiving the largest portion of its campaign money from the opioid industry and its allies. Nevada ranked first.

Put another way, if the prescriptions were passed out evenly, two Washingtonians out of every three people in the state would have opioids on hand. While in Oregon, doctors prescribed painkillers at a rate that nearly reached one per person last year.

The AP and Center For Public Integrity found out this information in September 2016. Please inform your readers on each candidate's acceptance of donations from pharmaceutical companies before the election.

In 2007, executives at Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin, pleaded guilty to misleading the public about the drug's addictive nature and agreed to \$600 million in fines. Since then, it appears the industry has paid large amounts to Oregon and Washington lawmakers. Does this explain why Umatilla County has no medical opiate detox?

Also, please support Ryan Lehnert for sheriff. He is up to date on the devastating opioid crisis.

Sally Sundin
Walla Walla

OTHER VIEWS



Trump, taxes and citizenship

You can be a taxpayer or you can be a citizen. If you're a taxpayer your role in the country is defined by your economic and legal status. Your primary identity is individual. You're perfectly within your rights to do everything you legally can to look after your self-interest.

Within this logic, it's perfectly fine for Donald Trump to have potentially paid no income taxes, even over a long period of time. As Trump and his allies have said, he would have broken no law. He would have taken advantage of the deductions just the way the rest of us take advantage of the mortgage deduction or any other; it's just that he had more deductions to draw upon.

As Trump and his advisers have argued, it is normal practice in our society to pay as little in taxes as possible. There are vast industries to help people do this. There is no wrong here.

The problem with the taxpayer mentality is that you end up serving your individual interest short term but soiling the nest you need to be happy in over the long term.

A healthy nation isn't just an atomized mass of individual economic and legal units. A nation is a web of giving and getting. You give to your job, and your employer gives to you. You give to your neighborhood, and your neighborhood gives to you. You give to your government, and your government gives to you.

If you orient everything around individual self-interest, you end up ripping the web of giving and receiving.

Neighbors can't trust neighbors. Individuals can't trust their institutions, and they certainly can't trust their government. Everything that is not explicitly prohibited is permissible. Everybody winds up suspicious and defensive and competitive. You wind up alone at 3 a.m. miserably tweeting out at your enemies.

And this is exactly the atomized mentality that is corroding America.

Years ago, David Foster Wallace put it gently: "It may sound reactionary, I know. But we can all feel it. We've changed the way we think of ourselves as citizens. We don't think of ourselves as citizens in the old sense of being small parts of something larger and infinitely more important to which we have serious responsibilities. We do still think of ourselves as citizens in the sense of being beneficiaries — we're actually conscious of our rights as American citizens and the nation's responsibilities to us and ensuring we get our share of the American pie."

The older citizenship mentality is a different mentality. It starts with the warm

glow of love of country. It continues with a sense of sweet gratitude that the founders of the country, for all their flaws, were able to craft a structure of government that is suppler and more lasting than anything we seem to be able to craft today.

The citizen enjoys a sweet reverence for all the gifts that have been handed down over time, and a generous piety about country that is the opposite of arrogance.

Out of this sweet parrot of emotions comes a sense of a common beauty that transcends individual

beauty. There's a sense of how a lovely society is supposed to be. This means that the economic desire to save money on taxes competes with a larger desire to be part of a lovely world.

It is normal practice in our society to pay as little in taxes as possible. There are vast industries to help people do this. There is no wrong here.

In a lovely society we all pull our fair share. Some things the government does are uncontroversial goods: protecting us from enemies, preserving the health and dignity of the old and infirm. These things have to be paid for, and in the societies we admire, everybody helps.

In a lovely society everybody practices a kind of social hygiene. There are some things that are legal but distasteful and

corrupt. In a lovely society people shun these corrupt and corrupting things. The tax code is a breeding ground for corruption, so they don't take advantage. The lottery system immiserates the poor so they don't contribute to its acceptability by playing.

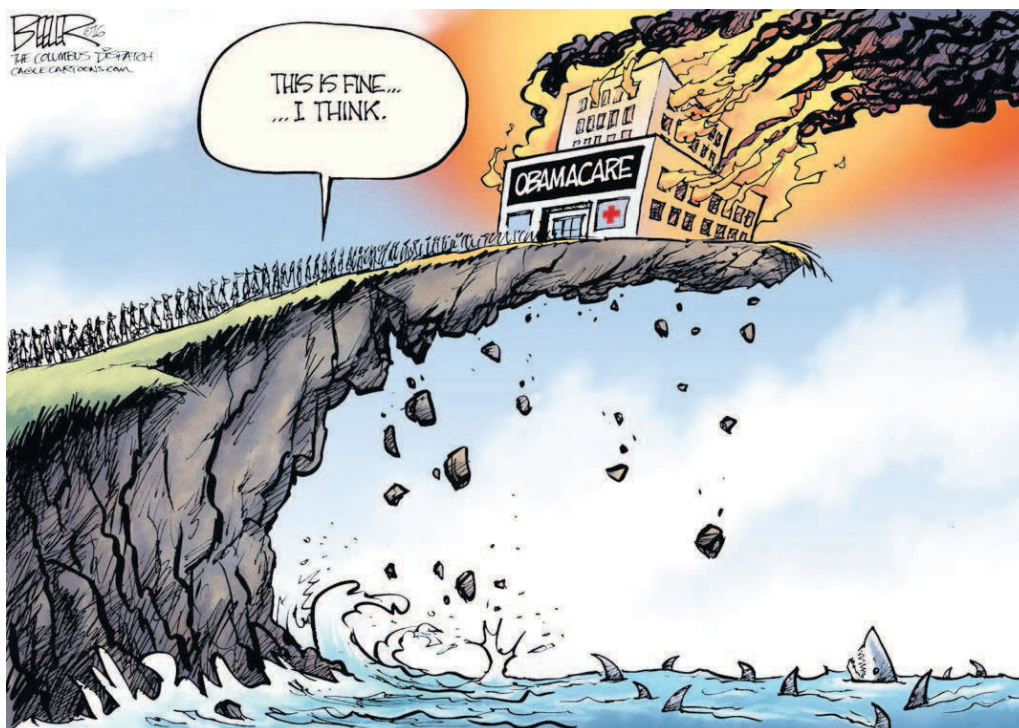
In a lovely society everyone feels privilege, but the rich feel a special privilege. They know they have been given more than they deserve, and that it is actually not going to hurt all that much to try to be worthy of what they've received.

Citizens aren't just sacrificing out of the nobility of their heart. They serve the common good for their own enrichment, too. If they practice politics they can learn prudence; if they serve in the military they can learn courage. Public citizenship is the path to personal growth.

You can say that a billionaire paying no taxes is fine and legal. But you have to adopt an overall mentality that shuts down a piece of your heart, and most of your moral sentiments.

That mentality is entirely divorced from the mentality of commonality and citizenship. That mentality has side effects. They may lead toward riches, but they lead away from happiness.

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in September 2003. He has been a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, a contributing editor at *Newsweek* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, and a commentator on PBS.



LETTERS POLICY

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